R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 014 463 SP 001 361

IMPACT OF CRITICAL SHORTAGES ON TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICIES.

BY- BROWN, WILLIAM B.
NEW YORK CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION, BROOKLYN, N.Y.

PUB DATE JUN 67

GRANT OEG-1-6-061665-1624
EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$0.68 15P.

DESCRIPTORS- BEGINNING TEACHERS, *DATA COLLECTION, FEDERAL AID, INFORMATION UTILIZATION, STATE LICENSING BOARDS, *STATE STANDARDS, TEACHER CERTIFICATION, TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS, *TEACHER RECRUITMENT, TEACHER SELECTION, *TEACHER SUPPLY AND DEMAND, *URBAN SCHOOLS,

THE SEVERE ELEMENTARY TEACHER SHORTAGE WHICH LOS ANGELES FACED IN THE FALL OF 1966, INVOLVING A DEFICIT OF SOME 1200 TEACHERS AFTER NORMAL RECRUITING PROCEDURES, IS DISCUSSED. SINCE THE SHORTAGE RESULTED IN LARGE PART FROM REDUCED ENROLLMENT IN THE ELEMENTARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS OF THE 12 LOS ANGELES AREA TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTIONS, WHICH TRADITIONALLY SUPPLY TWO-THIRDS OF ALL NEW TEACHERS TO THE SYSTEM, AN INTENSIVE OUT-OF-STATE RECRUITING PROGRAM WAS INSTITUTED. THE CAMPAIGN RESULTED IN 15 MORE OUT-OF-STATE RECRUITS THAN WAS NORMAL, FOR WHOM THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION GRANTED PROVISIONAL CERTIFICATION. NEXT, LOCAL RADIO AND TELEVISION WERE USED TO APPEAL TO ALL QUALIFIED PEOPLE IN THE AREA TO APPLY. FROM THE FLOOD OF RESPONSES, STAFF NEEDS WERE MET. IT IS SUGGESTED THAT IMPROVED DATA COLLECTION COULD HELP AVOID SUCH LAST MINUTE CRISES IN THE FUTURE. THIS DOCUMENT APPEARED IN GILBERT, H.B., AND LANG, G., "TEACHER SELECTION METHODS," 1967. (RF)

SP 001361

R 59J

TEACHER SELECTION METHODS

Project No. 6-1665
Grant No. OEG 1-6-061665-1624

Harry B. Gilbert

Pennsylvania State University

Gerhard Lang

Montclair State College

June 1967

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

ED014463

The research reported herein was performed pursuant to a grant with the Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Contractors undertaking such projects under Government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their professional judgment in the conduct of the project. Points of view or opinions stated do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Office of Education position or policy.

BOARD OF EXAMINERS
Board of Education of
The City of New York

New York, New York

Impact of Critical Shortages on Teacher Recruitment and Selection Policies

William B. Brown

Los Angeles City Schools

Purpose of This Paper

This is a brief statement relating how the Los Angeles City Schools recently encountered major difficulties in teacher recruitment which, if not solved, would have resulted in seriously adverse effects on the pupils and the educational program, and how well-established policies and procedures were adjusted in the face of the crisis to meet staffing shortages. I hope the experiences which I will report here and our tentative conclusions will be pertinent to the objectives of this conference.

The questions we are seeking to answer are: What are the best steps to take to meet an anticipated, crippling shortage? What measures will bring the best results for the schools in the short period of time available? The answers vary considerably from district to district, but we hope there are some common elements on which mutual discussion will be beneficial.

Finally, this paper seeks to serve as an argument against too much rigidity in selection policy. Policy must be broad enough and flexible enough to meet a great variety of teacher supply-demand conditions--general oversupply or general undersupply; oversupply in some secondary fields and undersupply at the elementary level; oversupply in one part of the district and undersupply in another; keen competition with smaller, more attractive districts; or unexpected and sudden increases in demand as a result of enactment of specially funded programs with local, state, federal, or foundation resources. All of these require practical, vigorous, adaptable policies which will produce the greatest possible recruitment results in the limited time which is generally available.

The critical elementary teacher sho. tage which the Los Angeles City Schools faced this year is an excellent illustration of the type of staffing problem encountered and the procedures instituted to meet the situation. The findings and conclusions are based upon our experience with this particular shortage, and with other shortages experienced since World War II. These policies and procedures are fully developed in personnel guides. They are ready for immediate implementation, and are sufficiently flexible so that adjustments can be made in terms of a particular emergency and a particular kind of teacher which may be in short supply.

Los Angeles City Schools -- An Overview

A little background information regarding the Los Angeles City Schools, the second largest school system in the nation, may be in order here.

The district is responsible for the education of 13.5 per cent of California's elementary school pupils and 17.3 per cent of those in the junior and senior high schools. When the current school year started in September, Los Angeles had a total of 367,000 pupils in 428 elementary schools, 136,000 students in 71 junior high schools, and 128,000 in 53 senior high schools. Our total enrollment, including adult schools and junior colleges, is approximately 794,000, and is expected to go over the 800,000 mark next February.

Our teaching staff now totals approximately 31,000 including adult education and junior colleges. Our non-certificated staff now totals in the neighborhood of 20,000.

Unlike most other major metropolitan school districts which have large student populations and serve more limited geographic areas, the Los Angeles district serves a sprawling area of almost 800 square miles. Its service area is roughly twice as large as the City of Los Angeles and includes, aside from the City of Los Angeles, eleven incorporated municipalities and large sections of unincorporated County territory. On a north-south axis, one can travel approximately 60 miles from the northernmost school in the San Fernando Valley to the southernmost school overlooking the Los Angeles Harbor in San Pedro, and never leave the district.

The Los Angeles district serves areas of wealth, but it also serves major areas of poverty. Almost 200 of the 599 schools are located in "disadvantaged areas."

The implications and relationships of these characteristics to recruitment are many. I mention but one. This year, a surplus of teachers wished to work in suburban San Fernando Valley, a largely middle class, Caucasian area, whereas there were teacher shortages in some other areas such as the central city.

Teacher Recruitment Situation in Los Angeles

Since World War II, Los Angeles has experienced a shortage of teachers of one type or another almost every year. A serious elementary shortage existed for a number of years during and immediately after World War II. Then, there was a gradual improvement in the supply at that level between 1955 and 1960, while, during this same period, shortages began to develop at the secondary level. The latter have intensified and continued for most of the past seven or eight years.

September, 1965, was the first year since World War II in which Los Angeles did not encounter major shortages at the elementary or secondary level except, of course, in mathematics and one or two technical fields. This favorable situation was due to two major factors, an 11 per cent increase in district starting salaries for teachers, which brought the minimum annual pay to $6,120, close to the highest in the state; and a major change in State licensing requirements under a new credential structure. The large number of candidates was directly traced to the efforts of young people to qualify under the old credential structure before the new requirements went into effect. Had it not been for these two factors, the shortages experienced during preceding years would have existed in September, 1965. So for most of the period from World War II to the present, Los Angeles has had the challenge and responsibility of meeting teacher shortages of varying degrees of seriousness and type. The problem is not unusual in our city. Rather, it is a normal situation which must be continually faced by the personnel staff.

The Los Angeles district has shown a consistent annual growth, following the end of World War II, of from four to six per cent. Since the early 1950's, we have been faced with the task of recruiting an average of 3,000 teachers annually to meet growth and replacement needs. But, in preparing our recruitment program for September of the 1966-67 school year, we were certain of one overriding factor--this was to be no "ordinary" recruiting year, not that there ever is an "ordinary" recruiting year.

For one thing, our operating divisions gave us the task of recruiting a total of 4,500 new teachers for this school year. The unusually large demand was caused by the projected implementation of several programs of a compensatory education nature, to be funded out of state and federal resources.

Personnel staffs throughout the country are all too familiar with the problems incident to participation in state and federally funded special programs--ESEA and the Economic Opportunity Act, for example. These programs have added a new dimension to planning for school districts involved, generally because of delays in approval of legislation but particularly because of last minute "under-the-wire" administrative approvals from the funding source.

Aside from the uncertainties attributable to the implementation of special programs, Los Angeles recruiters were being asked to find the needed teachers in the face of a severe shortage of elementary teachers, the worst in many years, and it is to this problem that the remainder of this paper will be directed.

Elementary Teacher Shortage and Steps Taken to Meet It

The serious shortage of elementary teachers anticipated at the start of the spring recruitment drive was based primarily upon a 33 per cent drop in the number of elementary student teachers trained at the 12 colleges and universities in the Los Angeles area, which have been the source of two-thirds of the new elementary teachers for the District. Thus, this serious drop in enrollment, combined with a doubling of demand, pointed very clearly to a critical problem facing the Los Angeles City Schools.

Other factors which have had their effect on the number of potential candidates available can be traced to the implementation of new credentialing legislation. These include:

1. Lack of adequate, up-to-date information in out-of-state institutions concerning California credential requirements,

2. Requirement of a fifth year of college and a subject matter major for full credential status,

3. Difficulties out-of-state recruits have in obtaining graduate standing in local institutions and in obtaining needed courses to meet the requirement of a fifth year.

Our normal needs for growth and replacement have been approximately 900 elementary teachers for the fall semester of each year. This spring we were faced with the recruitment of an additional 900 teachers to meet the following needs for September:

1. Implementation of legislation which reduced class norms to 31 in grades one through three...293 additional teachers,

2. Additional kindergarten teachers to staff a district increase in the kindergarten program...54 additional teachers,

3. Additional teachers for Elementary and Secondary Education Act programs...92 additional teachers (600 additional had been employed the previous February because of ESEA).

4. Implementation of new state legislation which reduced the pupil-teacher ratio to 25 to 1 in disadvantaged areas... 462 additional teachers.

Intensified spring recruitment program: A number of steps were taken by the district staff to meet the anticipated elementary teacher shortage:

1. Recruitment trips to other parts of the United States were more than doubled over those of the preceding year; 200 campuses were visited this past spring as against 80 the year before.

2. Both local campus and out-of-state recruitment trips were scheduled at earlier dates than in preceding years to place the district in a more advantageous position.

3. The time for processing out-of-state recruits and making contract offers was cut in half over the preceding year. This time is now five to ten days from date of interview, depending upon when transcripts are received at the Personnel Division.

4. Credential service to new recruits was substantially increased, including information and explanation of new regulations, individual counseling, and evaluation of transcripts. This service was necessary to overcome confusion and misunderstanding concerning the new credential structure.

The results of the spring recruitment drive for new elementary teachers were disappointing but not unexpected:

1. Only 415 were recruited at local campuses, a drop from 600 the previous year. This 31 per cent reduction tallied closely with the drop in student teacher enrollments mentioned previously.

2. The number of out-of-state recruits showed a similar drop over the preceding year in spite of the expanded recruitment program. Only 150 elementary recruits were obtained from out-of-state sources this past spring compared with 240 the previous year. This 37.5 per cent reduction paralleled the reduction experienced by other Southern California school districts.

An additional 250 new teachers were obtained from three other sources: former teachers returning to the District; approved secondary teachers in surplus fields, such as social studies, who were found to be qualified for elementary teaching service; and a limited number of teachers from other districts in the state.

The spring recruitment drive thus had netted the district only 815 of the 1,800 new elementary teachers expected to be needed

for the start of the fall semester. The personnel staff concluded that a critical shortage would exist this September unless emergency action were taken. Two steps were therefore taken:

1. A request was made to the State Board of Education for authorization for Los Angeles to use the provisional credential. (This credential in California is granted on an individual district basis when application to the State Board shows existence of a shortage and the fact that proper steps have been taken to meet the shortage. The credential requires the possession of a baccalaureate degree only; no teacher training is required.)

2. Plans were made for an intensive summer community recruitment drive to secure a minimum of 600 additional qualified teachers who might be employed on regular or provisional credentials. This drive was undertaken during August and early September. (Partial relief from the overall goal of 1,800 new teachers needed for the September opening of school resulted from a delay in implementation of one of the new state laws. This reduced the number needed by 400.)

The intensified summer recruitment drive was carried out with excellent support from newspapers, television, and radio. A community-wide appeal was made for qualified persons, housewives, and persons in other fields of work to respond to the urgent need for additional elementary teachers for the district. A special appeal was made to former teachers and to teachers on long-term leaves of absence to return to service this fall because of the shortage.

The response far exceeded expectations and was better than the response to similar drives held in preceding years: 900 applications were received, and 600 of the candidates were approved for contract assignment; 300 were employed on regular credentials, and 300 on provisional credentials. As a result of this drive, the elementary schools of the district started the fall semester with an adequate supply of new teachers.

For the second semester of the current school year, which starts in February, many more additional new elementary teachers will be required, 350 for growth and replacement, and 460 to implement the delayed specially funded state program for disadvantaged area schools. Once again, the Personnel Division will be confronted with the need to conduct a major recruitment program in the face of serious shortage at this level. Plans will be similar to those carried out during the summer months and will be conducted with every

expectation of finding all or a major part of the new teachers needed.

The qualities we seek in all new teachers are:

1. Strong interest in boys and girls,
2. Knowledge of educational principles and practices,
3. Knowledge of subject matter,
4. Command of English fundamentals,
5. Good scholarship,
6. Ability to get along with others,
7. Appropriate appearance,
8. Pleasing voice and clear speech,
9. Ability to present ideas,
10. Alertness and maturity of judgment.

Initial employment screening procedures are exactly the same for all teachers--regularly credentialed or provisionally credentialed. It is emphasized that all of the 300 teachers hired on provisional credentials were required to meet the same district standards as regularly credentialed teachers approved on a conditional one-year contract basis, including:

1. A baccalaureate degree,
2. A strong college academic record,
3. Strong personal qualifications for teaching,
4. Passing of two objective tests,

    a. English usage
    b. Principles and practices of elementary education.

The only difference between these two types of teachers is in the credential requirement. The regular teacher entering service on a four-year or partial fulfillment credential basis must have completed student teaching or have had equivalent teaching experience. The provisional teacher does not have to meet this requirement. To offset this lack, the Los Angeles City Schools, whenever possible, require all new provisional teachers to undergo an intensive summer training, in the district, of not less than two weeks, and to serve the first semester under the close guidance and supervision of a master teacher. It is preferred that all new teachers successfully complete a full student teaching assignment before starting service. However, in an emergency such as the present one, when this is not possible for all new teachers, district pre-service and in-service training programs can provide much of the necessary technical preparation.

A seven-point district training program for new elementary provisional teachers includes the following:

1. Those hired prior to the opening of elementary school summer classes are required to observe and participate in these classes for a minimum of two weeks.

2. Those hired after the close of summer programs are given special orientation in the area offices.

3. All provisional teachers spend a minimum of two full days in area induction meetings with supervisory personnel prior to the opening of school.

4. Attendance in a semester-long in-service training course is required. This provides orientation to subject fields, methodology and curriculum of the Los Angeles schools.

5. A permanent regular teacher is assigned full time as teacher advisor to each ten provisional teachers. The teacher advisor works in the classroom with the new teachers and provides conference time for assistance with problems.

6. Each area supervisory staff devotes special attention to the needs of provisional teachers.

7. Principals give additional special assistance and guidance to the provisional teachers.

Current Problems for Recruitment Review

Each year new ideas and innovations are evolved to help meet critical staffing problems. The accumulation and use of this experience enable a district to face future shortages with considerable confidence.

It has become axiomatic, for instance, that policies must be readily adjustable to meet emergencies, no matter how short the warning. Also, selection procedures must be considered within the context of the recruitment function, for there is no value in having sound selection procedures if no candidates will apply for employment.

In "tooling" up to meet the year-by-year needs for new teachers, it is important that recruitment planning and research provide guidelines for future action. There is often insufficient study and planning behind emergency recruitment programs. There are a number of basic questions to which we need to give increasing attention, if planning is to be more effective. Some of these are as follows:

1. Has the job of the teacher changed significantly in recent years?

2. To what extent is discipline becoming a more serious problem than before and what implications does this have for the recruitment selection process?

3. Have criteria and specifications for selection been realistically revised in recognition of any important changes in the work of teachers?

4. Have teacher training institutions been effectively informed of changes in the teacher's job?

5. Has teacher training been modified to meet the changes in the work of the teacher?

6. Have these institutions recognized the great importance of preparing teachers for service in economically, educationally deprived, disadvantaged, or culturally "different" areas, and are the teacher trainees assigned to take at least part of their student teaching in poverty area schools?

7. Have the colleges informed school districts realistically in their appraisal reports concerning student teaching success in handling pupils in poverty areas?

8. Has recruitment been adjusted to meet changes in the nature of the teaching job?

9. Is a prime recruitment objective the selection of teachers who are qualified to serve in all types of situations in urban districts, or can the criteria be specialized to meet varying community needs?

10. Are all possible school and community resources being utilized for assistance in this recruitment process?

11. Are we learning about and profiting from the influences which lead teachers to select large urban centers and to make a life career of teaching in these centers; conversely, are attempts being made to ascertain factors which keep prospective teachers away from urban centers?

12. Have urban districts learned how to utilize recruitment to improve the image of the large city as a fine place in which to teach and live?

Need for more adequate supply-demand data: With current means

of communication and data processing, monthly reports on both surplus and shortages should be provided to school districts on national and state levels. In Los Angeles, and in California generally, the current elementary teacher shortage could have been foreseen if all the pertinent data had been assembled and compiled in late 1965.

Events during the past year have made available supply-demand information completely inadequate. The war in Viet Nam with the attendant effect of the draft on teachers and prospective teachers, the civil rights problems in many of our cities, the specially funded programs to aid deprived areas--these and other influences are not readily translated into technical data. But translated they must be, and the data must be disseminated widely so that school districts and teacher training institutions may plan in advance to meet shortages most effectively.

Conclusions Concerning Recruitment Policies

Teacher shortages may not be as permanent as death and taxes, but, at least for the foreseeable future, recruiting of adequate numbers of well-trained teachers will be a perennial issue for personnel staffs of urban school districts.

The time has long passed when those of us in the personnel offices of big city school systems, particularly those cities experiencing periods of growth, can afford to "sit back" and wait for fully-trained teaching candidates to flock to our personnel offices.

Rather, we must formulate an aggressive, flexible, and comprehensive policy, which should be based upon the following facts:

1. Close working relationships between public schools, teacher training institutions, and the State Department of Education are essential to meet shortage problems. The greater the shortage, the more cooperative effort on an immediate day-to-day basis is required. A team approach is essential in coordinating credential policies, teacher training policies, district selection practices, and school staff requirements.

2. A large and excellent reservoir of potentially fine teachers exists in metropolitan areas such as Los Angeles, which can be drawn upon in times of critical need. This reservoir is made up of college graduates, housewives, and persons in other fields of work, who have excellent

scholastic records in college, the personal qualifications, and the background of experience for working effectively with children. This reservoir should be tapped without hesitation when it has been determined that the supply of regularly credentialed teachers is exhausted.

3. Television, newspapers, and radio stations can give very valuable help to a school district in a large metropolitan area, in recruiting needed new teachers from the ranks of housewives, recent college graduates, and persons in professional fields other than teaching.

4. Teacher salaries must be kept highly favorable. The minimum salary must be the highest or close to the highest in the state. This is essential if the largest city area and the largest school district are to compete effectively with smaller and more attractive suburban school systems for the limited supply of new teachers.

5. The well established screening procedures for the employment of regular probationary teachers cannot be allowed to interfere with the recruitment process in meeting critical shortages. At the same time, an effective, streamlined screening procedure must be utilized for initial employment on a contract basis to assure that district standards will be met. To state the matter bluntly, get the qualified recruit on the job first, then examine him closely for career status in the system. An important part of the screening procedure is the requirement that the formal examination must be passed during the first year of service.

6. The avenues of entry and recruitment contact must be manifold:

    a. District employment offices located at convenient places within the school system, not restricted to one central location,

    b. Interviews with recruits on all local campuses of major colleges and universities,

    c. Out-of-state interviews at recruitment centers and on college and university campuses in various parts of the nation.

Such recruitment requires a minimum staff for year-round operation, and amplified staff for peak recruitment during the spring and summer months.

7. Employment standards should not be lowered even in the face of serious shortage. For our district, only one exception to this basic policy is made; that is, the meeting of the student teaching requirement. High selection standards are essential to preserve the educational program of the district. Recruitment must be intensified, salaries may need to be raised, processing of teachers may need to be streamlined, and pre-service and in-service help to new provisionals may need to be expanded; but under no circumstances should personal and academic standards be lowered.

8. Technical credential requirements, which may be very sound when the supply-demand balance is good, should not be allowed to stand in the way of recruitment in time of shortage. Temporary waiving of such requirements, however, does not warrant a district's lowering its standards in any way.

9. Resources of the supervisory and teaching staffs should be utilized to provide training and guidance for provisional teachers needed in an emergency. Lack of teacher training, including student teaching, is not an insurmountable obstacle.

10. Recruitment, above all, needs to be honest. If shortages exist only in disadvantaged areas, the community should be told this as frankly as possible. Recruitment should be undertaken directly and specifically to meet this shortage, seeking out the kinds of persons who not only have strong teaching qualifications, but also genuine interest in teaching in these areas of our cities.

Looking Ahead

1. Much more needs to be known concerning essential factors in successful recruiting of well qualified teachers for large urban districts. The entire recruitment function warrants greater study and research than it has received to date. Also, more research is needed concerning the most effective ways to screen and process recruits quickly so that they will respond to offers of employment from the urban district.

2. Much better state and national information on the teacher supply-demand situation is required. Speedier and more frequent checking, both with colleges and public school systems, are needed. The current elementary shortage is

a classic example. A telephone call to the 10 or 15 larger districts in the country in late spring or early summer of this year would have revealed that most had, or were anticipating, a serious shortage. The hurricane flag was up, the barometer was steadily falling, the supply-demand relationship was far out of balance; but it was "statistics" as usual. The supply-demand studies had been closed for the year. Clearly, a major overhaul and up-dating of our state and national information in this area is essential.

3. Large urban districts must have the necessary freedom to solve their own recruitment problems. Too many outside agencies are interfering. Those who are closest to the recruitment and selection of teachers and who live with the problems the year round and have them in sharpest focus, are the ones to take action and get the results. State and federal financial assistance is of increasing importance, but interference through technical credential regulations, such as exists in some of our states, is becoming a serious obstacle to achieving necessary recruitment results. There is a need for a study of the forces at work at the state level, which often become major problems for local school districts in carrying out their staffing responsibilities. Far too much staff time is now being spent in studying proposed new state regulations for support or opposition, understanding them after they are adopted, and making necessary adjustments. If local districts are given greater freedom and additional resources, the staffing problems of our large urban school systems will be effectively and promptly solved.

The task ahead will require our best efforts. One of the most valuable ways to meet it is to have the kind of pooling of experience among the great cities of the United States which this conference provides.